

# Annual Report



**iowa**collaboration  
for**youth**development

**State of Iowa**  
February 1, 2010



CHESTER J. CULVER  
GOVERNOR

PATTY JUDGE  
LT. GOVERNOR

PRESTON A. DANIELS  
DIRECTOR

DIVISIONS OF:  
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES  
CRIMINAL & JUVENILE JUSTICE PLANNING  
DEAF SERVICES  
LATINO AFFAIRS  
NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  
STATUS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS  
STATUS OF ASIAN-PACIFIC ISLANDERS  
STATUS OF WOMEN

TO: Governor Chester Culver  
Members of the General Assembly

FROM: Preston Daniels, Chair  
Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council

Date: February 1, 2010

The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council respectfully submits its first annual report, as required by the passage of House File 315 during the 2009 Legislative Session. The legislation codified the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC). The ICYD Council has used its first six months creating a structure, prioritizing issues, and developing recommendations and strategies.

The ICYD Council is committed to providing the Legislature and Governor with data, information, and recommendations to improve the lives and futures of Iowa's youth by:

- Coordinating youth policy and programs across state agencies
- Increasing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services for youth
- Adopting positive youth development principles and practices at the state and local level.

The following document includes a prioritized issue and goal, data that supports selecting the issue, and recommended actions that will help Iowa achieve the goal – "Increasing Iowa's Graduation Rate". This new collaborative multi-agency body recognizes the financial issues facing the State of Iowa and is committed to initiating many of the recommended actions without any need for increased state funding.

We look forward to working with the Governor's Office and the Legislature to increase the graduation rate. We will notify you when specific targeted actions are required by you to assist in removing barriers and offering opportunities for Iowa's youth. The ICYD Council will also keep you informed of the progress made toward the goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this information.

Sincerely,

Preston A. Daniels, Chair  
Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council

State of Iowa  
**Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council**  
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Elisabeth Buck, Director, Iowa Workforce Development  
Judy Jeffrey, Director, Department of Education  
Gary Kendell, Director, Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy  
Charles Krogmeier, Director, Department of Human Services  
Adam Lounsbury, Executive Director, Commission on Volunteer Service  
Richard Moore, Director, Child Advocacy Board  
Chuck Morris, Director, ISU Extension, 4-H Youth Development  
Kathy Stone, Division Director, Department of Public Health  
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***Acknowledgments***

The ICYD Council thanks all of the staff who contributed to producing this report. A special acknowledgment is extended to individuals outside of our state agencies who made important contributions in sharing their thoughts and expertise with us. They are: Carol Behrer, Youth Policy Institute of Iowa; Jeff Grimes, A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS); Amy Daniels, AmeriCorps VISTA member; and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC).



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## I. Introduction

This is the first annual report from the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council to the Governor and General Assembly. The report will provide information on the:

- Purpose and membership of the ICYD Council;
- Establishment of a prioritized issue that the ICYD Council will address across state agencies;
- Development of Recommended Actions to address the prioritized issue across state agencies to the Governor and General Assembly for 2010.

House File 315 was signed by the Governor on April 9, 2009, codifying the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC). Prior to becoming formal “councils”, both ICYD and SIYAC operated as non-statutory entities. The ICYD began in 1999 as an informal network of state agencies from ten departments serving as a forum to foster improvement in and coordination of state and local youth policy and programs. The ICYD has developed the following Youth Development Result Areas:

- All youth have safe and supportive families, schools, and communities;
- All youth are healthy and socially competent;
- All youth are successful in school;
- All youth are prepared for a productive adulthood.

The ICYD has historically participated in a variety of state and national youth initiatives and has been recognized nationally (e.g. National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association, Forum for Youth Investment) for its work in coordinating youth development efforts. The legislation codifying the ICYD Council strengthens this network to improve results among Iowa’s youth through the adoption and application of positive youth development principles and practices. The formalized ICYD Council provides a venue to enhance information and data sharing; develop strategies across state agencies; and present prioritized recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly that will improve the lives and futures of Iowa youth.

The SIYAC was established by Governor Vilsack in 2001 as a vehicle for high school youth to inform legislators on youth issues and currently consists of 15 youth between 14 –21 years of age who reside and attend school in Iowa. The ICYD Council is overseeing the activities of SIYAC and has sought input from these youth leaders in the development of more effective policies, practices, programs, and this Annual Report. For 2009 - 2010, SIYAC has formed four committees: Teen Nutrition, Youth Outreach, Substance Abuse, and Life After Graduation. SIYAC will be presenting independent information and recommendations on youth issues associated with these committees to the General Assembly and Governor’s Office during the 2010 legislative session.

The Department of Human Rights is the lead agency for the ICYD Council and is coordinating its activities. Preston Daniels, director of the Department of Human Rights, has been elected Chair of the ICYD Council. The agendas and minutes of the meetings are posted on the ICYD website: [www.icyd.iowa.gov](http://www.icyd.iowa.gov).



## Purpose

The ICYD Council's vision statement, as stated in the legislation is:

***“All Iowa youth will be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for adulthood.”***

The purpose of the ICYD Council is to improve the lives and futures of Iowa's youth by:

- Adopting and applying positive youth development principles and practices at the state and local levels;
- Increasing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services and other supports for youth;
- Improving and coordinating state youth policy and programs across state agencies.

## Membership

The initial ICYD Council membership is the directors or chief administrators (or their designees) of the state agencies and programs that had been participating prior to the legislation. The ICYD Council has the ability to expand membership to include others who will assist the Council in achieving its purpose. In addition to each agency's director (or designee) serving on the ICYD Council, many of the agencies have additional staff who actively participate in meetings and complete tasks as directed by the ICYD Council. Below are the members of the ICYD Council:

### ICYD COUNCIL MEMBERS

Preston Daniels, Chair Director, Department of Human Rights	Adam Lounsbury, Executive Director Commission on Volunteer Service
Elisabeth Buck, Director Iowa Workforce Development	Richard Moore, Director Child Advocacy Board
Judy Jeffrey, Director Department of Education	Kathy Stone, Division Director Department of Public Health
Gary Kendell, Director Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy	Chuck Morris, Director ISU Extension, 4-H Youth Development
Charles Krogmeier, Director Department of Human Services	Shanell Wagler, Facilitator Office of Community Empowerment

The ICYD Council has met monthly since its inaugural meeting on September 29, 2009 to review data, receive reports from state agencies and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC), and establish priorities and recommended actions. Many issues affecting youth were discussed during the meetings. The prioritized issue – ***Increasing Iowa's Graduation Rate*** - was selected due to its high visibility and as a summative measure of youth development efforts, and the many cross-agency issues that contribute to youth graduating from high school. Each of the agencies represented on the ICYD Council will have a role in achieving this goal.

## II. Prioritized Issue: Increasing Iowa's Graduation Rate

**Good is the enemy of great.** And that is one of the reasons that we have so little that becomes great. We don't have great schools, principally because we have good schools.  
-Jim Collins in *Good to Great* (2001)

The ICYD Council has prioritized two of the Youth Development Result Areas: *All Iowa youth are successful in school; and all youth are prepared for a productive adulthood.* Graduation and dropout rates are both included as measures, or indicators, for these result areas. The ICYD Council members agreed that the focal point for collaborative efforts be a specific and aggressive goal for the state. After reviewing the data presented below, the ICYD Council agreed on the following goal:

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By 2020 Iowa will increase the graduation rate from 89% to 95%. If the cohort enrollment remains approximately 39,000 students, about 2,000 additional youth will graduate each year.

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In addition to this overarching goal, an intermediate goal is: *By 2015, Iowa will decrease the number of annual dropouts by 25%, or 1,100 youth.*

The ICYD Council recognizes that several other issues (e.g. substance abuse, public safety, family, employment, and mental health) will affect achieving this goal and that it is imperative each of the state agencies on the ICYD Council has an active role. The below measures are critical in monitoring progress for all Iowa youth towards the graduation goal:

1. The number of students at each high school grade level who are on the trajectory to graduate on time.
2. The gaps for graduation and dropout rates for subpopulations (i.e. race, ethnicity, second language learners, low socioeconomic, and students with disabilities).
3. The number of youth age 16-19 who are not in school and not working.

### Economic Impact of the Graduation Rate on Iowa's Economy

Iowans can take pride in having one of the highest graduation rates in the nation. The overall graduation rate in 2008 was 88.70%. While Iowa's dropout rate of 1.96% is also low in comparison with other states, the loss of 4,442 students from the graduating class of 2008 damages Iowa's economy. The "costs" of dropping out include decreased personal income and revenues, increased unemployment and welfare burden, and increased risk of incarceration and poor health outcomes.

A closer look at graduation and dropout rates in Iowa reveals that there are **significant gaps for students enrolled in urban districts, minority students, and students with disabilities.** In order to compete nationally and globally and to overcome current economic challenges, all students in Iowa need to graduate prepared *for* college or challenging career training. What would it take to move Iowa from good to great in graduating Iowa students?

### ***Graduation for “some” is not acceptable in Iowa.***

The graduation rate has significant implications for Iowa’s economy. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education:

- More than \$336 million would be added to Iowa’s economy by 2020 if students of color graduated at the same rate as white students
- Iowa would save more than \$84.4 million in health care costs over the course of the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.
- Iowa’s economy would see a combination of savings and revenue of about \$44 million in reduced crime spending and increased earnings each year if the male high school graduation rate increased by just 5 percent.

Dr. James R. Veale reported in his presentation at the Risky Business Conference held in Des Moines in September, 2009, that 57.2% of the Iowa prison inmates are dropouts. The Department of Corrections’ *FY 2008 Annual Report* states the average cost of incarceration in 2008 was \$31,032. The Department of Education’s *2009 Annual Condition of Education Report*, states the average total per student expenditure for 2007-08 was \$8,432.

### **Graduation and Dropout Data**

As mentioned above, there are significant gaps between the overall graduation and dropout rates of Iowa students and the rates for subpopulations, as reflected in Table 1.

Table 1. *Iowa Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate (Grades 7-12), 2008-2009.*

	White	Overall	Asian	Students with IEPs	Enrollment 7,500+	All Minority	African American	Hispanic	American Indian
Graduation	90.80	88.70	88.40	84.40	78.70	72.80	71.00	69.30	67.70
Dropout	1.69	1.96	1.75	2.31	3.64	3.74	4.06	3.90	5.96

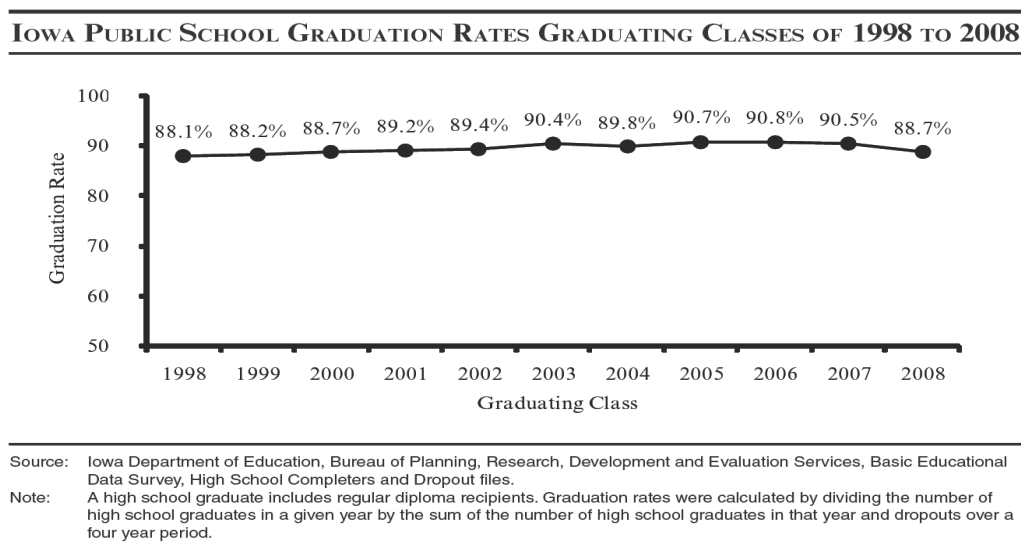
Source. Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Planning and Research, Development and Evaluation Services, Project EASIER.

A graduation gap of 6 percent for students that receive special education services with Individual Education Plans (IEP), 12 percent for urban districts, and 18 percent for all minority students is unacceptable. While minority students represent only 15.4 percent of the total enrollment, they represent 25% of all dropouts in Iowa. Further, minorities have been overrepresented in Iowa’s juvenile justice and child welfare systems for many years. In 2008, minority youth comprised 13% of the State’s youth population, but nearly 40% of youth in detention facilities; 31% of children in family foster care; and 24% of youth in shelter care were minority youth.

Figure 1 shows the 11-year trend for Iowa graduation rates. There has been little change between 1998 and 2008. Figure 2 shows a similar lack of change for dropout rates.



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

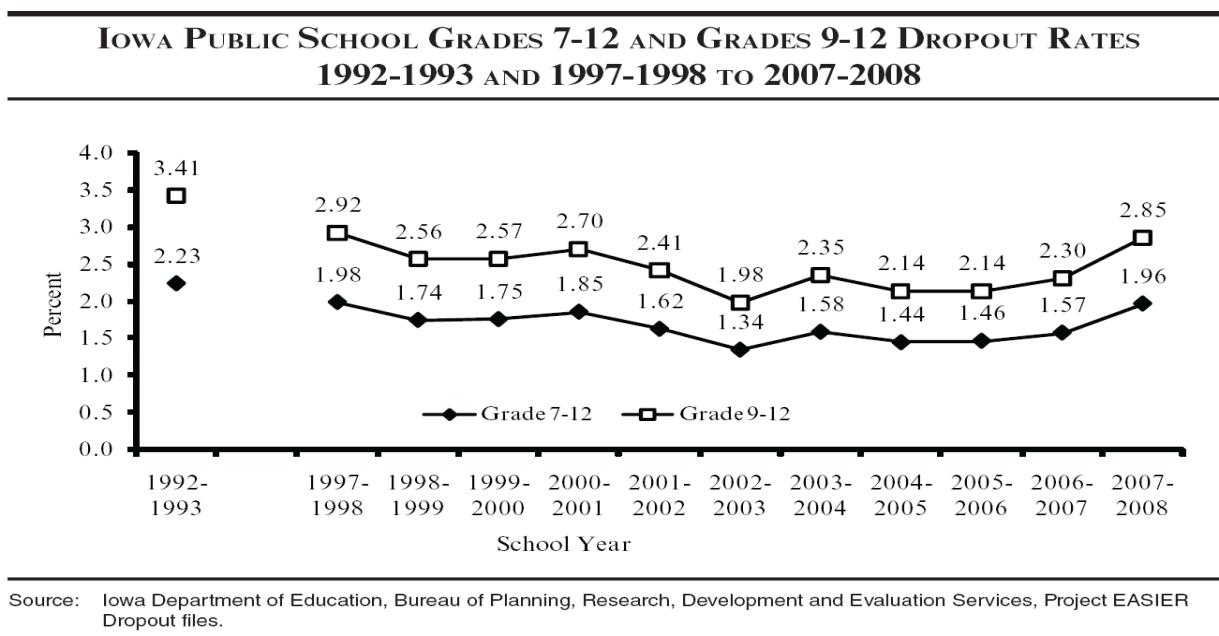


Figure 3 provides information about graduation numbers and rates in 1998, 2007, and 2008 for designated minority populations. While gains have been made for African Americans, American Indians, and Asians, the graduation gap between all minority groups combined and white students narrowed by only 2.3 percent. The gap for Hispanic students increased from 17.1% in 1998 to 21.5% in 2007.

**Figure 3**

<b>IOWA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY 1998, 2007, AND 2008</b>						
Ethnic Group	Number of Graduates			Graduation Rates		
	1998	2007	2008	1998	2007	2008
<b>All Minority</b>	1,819	3,108	3,322	73.4%	77.6%	72.8%
African American	696	1,190	1,264	67.6	74.6	71.0
American Indian	84	152	159	62.2	75.6	67.7
Asian	508	610	631	88.0	91.2	88.4
Hispanic	531	1,156	1,268	72.0	75.1	69.3
White	32,370	31,019	31,251	89.1	92.0	90.8
State	34,189	34,127	34,573	88.1	90.5	88.7

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Planning, Research, Development and Evaluation Services, Project EASIER Dropout files.

Figure 4 provides a comparison of dropout rates by Race/Ethnicity with the corresponding enrollment rates for minority populations. A percentage of the total number of dropouts for any particular minority population that is higher than the corresponding percentage of the total enrollment reflects disproportionality. For example, while African American students represent 5.14% of the total enrollment, they account for 10.65% of the total dropouts in Iowa in 2007-08. For African Americans, American Indians, and Hispanic youth, their representation in the dropout rate is nearly double their representation in the statewide enrollment.

**Figure 4**

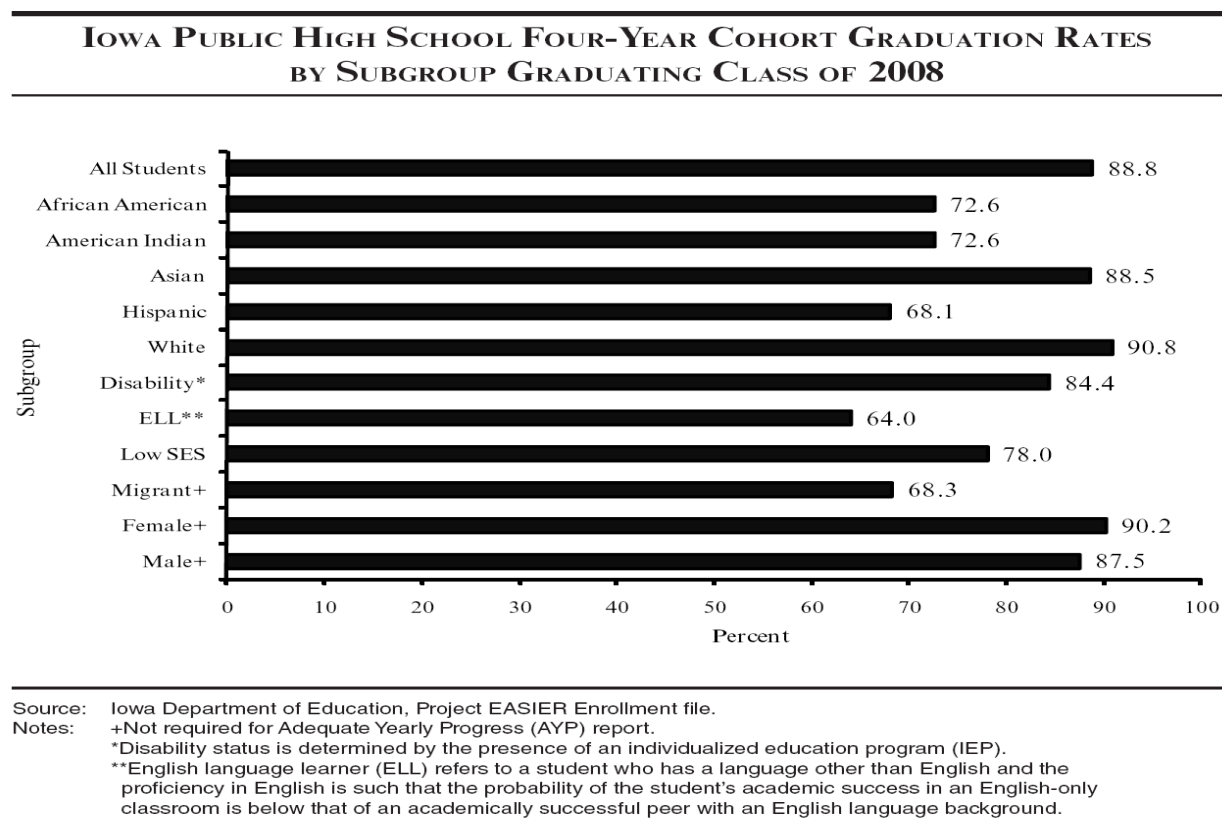
<b>2007-2008 IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADES 7-12 DROPOUTS AND ENROLLMENTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY</b>					
Race/Ethnic Group	Dropout Rate	Total Dropouts	% of Total Dropouts	Total Enrollments	% of Total Enrollment
<b>All Minority</b>	3.74%	1,107	24.92%	29,613	13.06%
African American	4.06	473	10.65	11,658	5.14
American Indian	5.96	79	1.78	1,325	0.58
Asian	1.75	76	1.71	4,341	1.91
Hispanic	3.90	479	10.78	12,289	5.42
White	1.69	3,335	75.08	197,190	86.94
State*	1.96	4,442	100.00	226,803	100.00

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Planning, Research, Development and Evaluation Services, Project EASIER Dropout files.

Note: \*Figures may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

In addition to racial and ethnic minority populations, other subgroups such as students living in poverty (Low Socioeconomic Status), students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL), migrants, and males are graduating at rates that are lower than the overall state graduation rate.

**Figure 5**



## Barriers To Learning

The reasons that students drop out of school or do not graduate on time are many and varied. Some students have negative experiences at school and simply don't like school in general. Other students have responsibilities that compete with school such as helping to support their families. There are often multiple reasons that students leave school. Contributing circumstances are in place long before the actual event of "dropping out."

Dropping out of school is a process that can begin very early in a child's life. A child that has behavioral challenges in an early childhood program may continue these behaviors as they enter school and begin to fall behind because of behavioral difficulties. Children who do not acquire the necessary reading skills at the elementary level will continue to struggle as they enter middle school. A student who does not feel accepted by peers in the early years will become socially isolated. When these students reach high school, they do not feel competent or connected and will often drop out.

Reasons for dropping out of school can be described as “push” and “pull” effects. Push effects are those reasons that occur within the school such as not liking school, being unable to get along with teachers and/or students, frequent suspensions, not feeling safe at or connected to school, falling behind with school work, and failing grades. Pull effects come from the external environment and include things like needing to work, having a child, peers who have dropped out, and needing to care for family members.

Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 found that school-related push effects were the most frequently reported reasons for dropping out. The High School and Beyond longitudinal study included interviews with nearly 2,000 students who had dropped out of school. When asked for their reasons for leaving school, 10% or more of those interviewed identified these reasons:

- Did not like school (33%)
- Poor grades (33%)
- Were offered a job and chose to work (19%)
- Getting married (18%)
- Could not get along with teachers (15%)
- Had to help support family (11%)
- Pregnancy (11%)
- Expelled or suspended (10%)

*The Silent Epidemic* report further supports the above findings:

- Nearly 70 percent of dropouts said they were not motivated to work hard, and two-thirds would have worked harder if more had been demanded of them.
- Approximately one-third left for personal reasons and one-third cited “failing in school as a major factor.

By looking beyond these “symptoms” of dropping out and by identifying the root causes, a comprehensive system of integrated quality supports can be developed that will keep students in school until they graduate and prepare them for success after high school.

### III. Recommended Actions

Achieving a 95 percent graduation rate by 2020 is an ambitious target. The ICYD Council is committed to concentrating its attention on and monitoring progress toward this goal, but reaching it will require concerted, coordinated efforts by policymakers, education systems, and multiple state and community partners. To organize these efforts, the Council will focus on the following five broad areas. The Council will refine and expand specific action steps to operationalize these action areas over the next year.

#### 1) Focus on underperforming schools and communities.

In 2007-2008, fifty percent of Iowa school districts had a 95 percent or higher graduation rate; more than eighty percent had a graduation rate of 90 percent or higher. In contrast, 23 school districts (6.6 percent) had a graduation rate of less than 85 percent that year. In 2007-2008, eight school districts accounted for 50 percent of all 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade dropouts in the state. Clearly, if we are to achieve our ultimate graduation rate goal, we must work together to turnaround those schools and communities that have the most to gain. Through further data analysis, the ICYD Council will identify up to ten schools and invite them to partner with us to significantly improve graduation rates. Within these communities, our efforts will focus on the analysis of local contributing factors and barriers to learning, and galvanizing resources and expertise across systems to create a range of high quality supportive activities and services that support all young people on a path toward positive, productive adulthood.

#### 2) Assess current state initiatives and maximize existing resources.

Considerable resources are already targeted to improving school performance and reducing dropout rates. More than \$140 million is levied each year for dropout prevention activities specifically, and millions more are spent to address a myriad of issues that affect school success. It is critical that these investments be utilized effectively and efficiently. The ICYD Council will complete an inventory and assessment of current spending and initiatives related to improving high school graduation that will help inform decisions about the allocation of existing resources. It is also important to take advantage of a number of federal opportunities that have the potential to generate additional resources for the state. The Iowa Department of Education's application for a federal "Race to the Top" grant and changes in the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities funding stream are two examples of federal opportunities that hold promise for increasing resources. The state should leverage existing resources by aggressively pursuing these and other opportunities.

#### 3) Investigate research-based approaches and effective strategies.

Across the country and within Iowa, schools and communities facing the challenge of too low graduation rates and too wide achievement gaps among various subpopulations of students have implemented strategies that have been successful. Much can be learned from these places, along with the following research and tools.

- A. *Making a Difference – Eight State Legislative Policy Recommendations for Improving America's High Schools*, developed by the National Conference of State Legislatures:



Research, and examine the policy recommendations by NCSL and determine which of the policy recommendations will benefit Iowa's schools.

*B. Grad Nation: A Guidebook to Help Communities Tackle the Graduation Crisis* was developed by America's Promise and provides proven strategies to increase graduation rates:

- Developing a Comprehensive Set of Solutions
- Creating School Transformation
- Developing Comprehensive Student Supports
- Establishing Early Warning Systems
- Improving College and Career Readiness
- Developing Dropout Prevention and Recovery Systems
- Ensuring Effective Policies and Resource Allocations

The ICYD Council will support target communities to match strategies with the unique needs, gaps, and resources that have been identified for each school.

*C. Youth Program Quality Assessment*, developed by the *David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality* is being used in three Iowa pilot communities, assessing the quality of youth programs and assisting in the development of Quality Improvement Plans for the programs. The ICYD Council will support target communities in assessing the quality of the existing youth programs and developing improvement plans for the respective youth programs.

#### **4) Coordinate across systems to identify and support vulnerable students.**

Many young people with barriers to development and learning are involved in other state run or state supported systems. These youth, who may be receiving services from Iowa's child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health or developmental disability systems, are among the most vulnerable to poor outcomes, including failing to graduate from high school. To effectively meet the needs of these youth requires coordination and cooperation across the systems that serve them, such as the Department of Human Services' Fostering Connections and Children of Color efforts; and Workforce Development's One-Stop Centers and the Workforce Investment Act.

The ICYD Council is committed to fostering an environment that demands systems work together to ensure that systemic issues are not barriers to the success of Iowa's youth.

#### **5) Engage additional stakeholders.**

As mentioned above, achieving our goal will require active involvement and commitment of multiple players. Over the next year, the ICYD Council will reach out to youth, parents, school districts, education organizations, other service systems, and the private sector to increase awareness, broaden the dialogue, and include numerous perspectives in increasing high school graduation. Further, we will look to existing groups such as the Department of Education's Learning Supports Advisory Team, the Governor's Youth Race and Detention Task Force Implementation Committee, and Iowa's Children's Justice State Council to be leaders and allies in coordinated efforts to achieve the shared goals of increasing high school graduation and successfully preparing all Iowa youth for a productive adulthood.